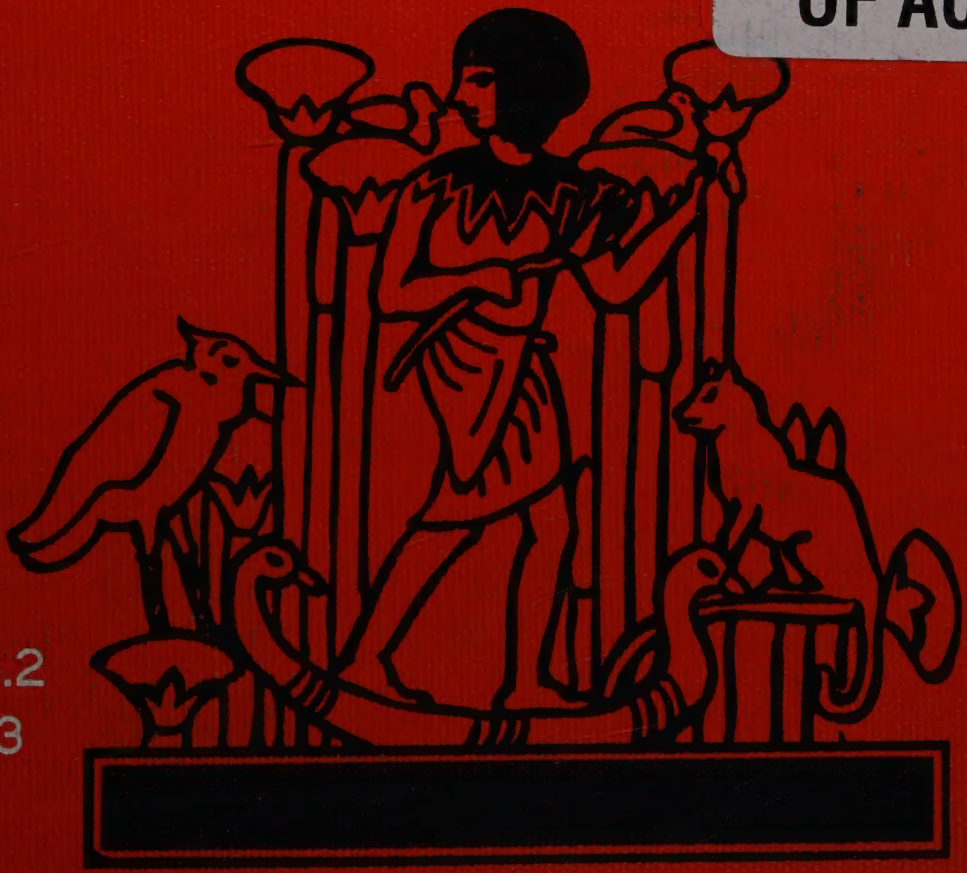
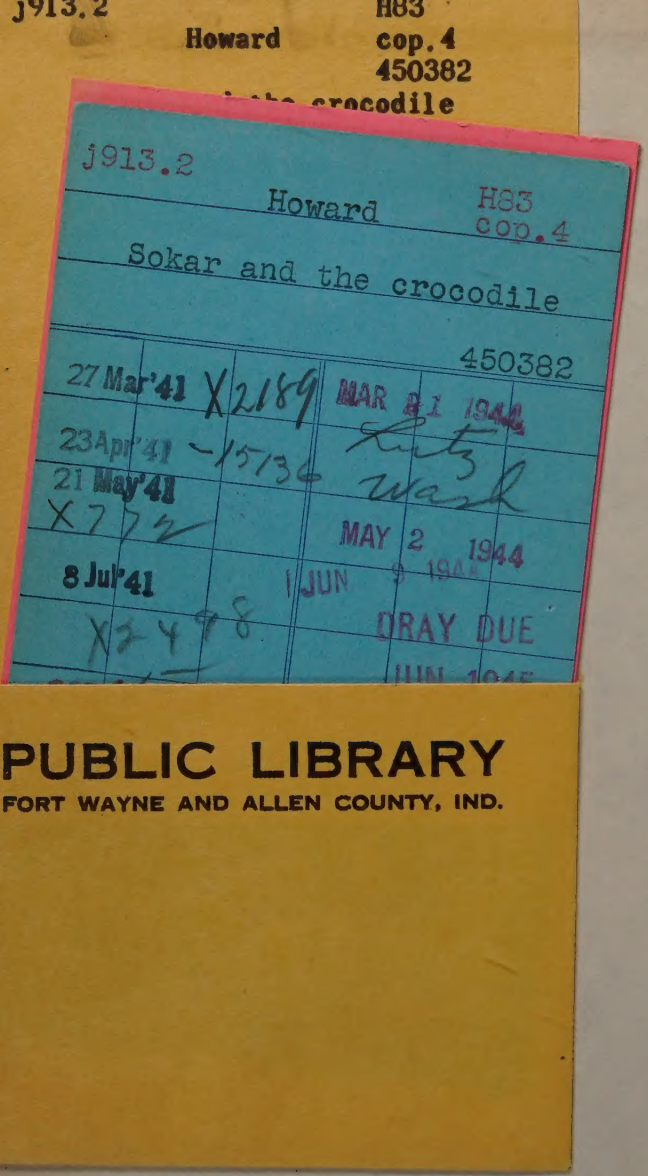
SOKAR AND THE CROCODILE

FRIENDS
OF ACPL



j913.2
H83



j913.2 H83
Howard cop. 4
450382
the crocodile

j913.2
Howard H83
cop. 4
Sokar and the crocodile
450382
27 Mar'41 X2189 MAR 21 1944
23 Apr'41 -1513c
21 May'41 X772 MAY 2 1944
8 Jul'41 X2498 JUN 9 1944
DRAY DUE
JUN 1945

PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE AND ALLEN COUNTY, IND.

FRIENDS
OF ACPL

SOKAR AND THE CROCODILE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA · MADRAS
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
OF CANADA, LIMITED
TORONTO

The heron lit on the prow of the boat.

SOKAR
AND THE CROCODILE

A FAIRY STORY OF EGYPT

BY

ALICE WOODBURY HOWARD

Black and White Illustrations by

COLEMAN KUBINYI

j 913.2
H 23

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1940

COPYRIGHT, 1928,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

All rights reserved—no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review written for inclusion in magazine or newspaper.

Set up and electrotyped. Published September, 1928.
Reprinted December, 1930.
September, 1935. June, 1936.
May, 1937. October, 1938.
January, 1940.

SET UP BY BROWN BROTHERS LINOTYPERS
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY

450382

To R. H.

SOKAR AND THE CROCODILE

SOKAR AND THE CROCODILE

I

In the land of Egypt, before the pyramids were built, there lived a little brown boy. His name was Sokar-Shines-with-Spirit. Such a fine long name might have belonged to a prince, but Sokar was as poor as poor could be, and lived in a small mud house in a mud village.

Mud and clay! Mud and clay and water! Sokar's house was made of mud, and the jars his father worked on all day long were made of red and yellow clay. He made them with his hands while he sat cross-legged on the ground. Sokar carried the clay in a basket from the river bank. The thing he liked best in all the world was the river.

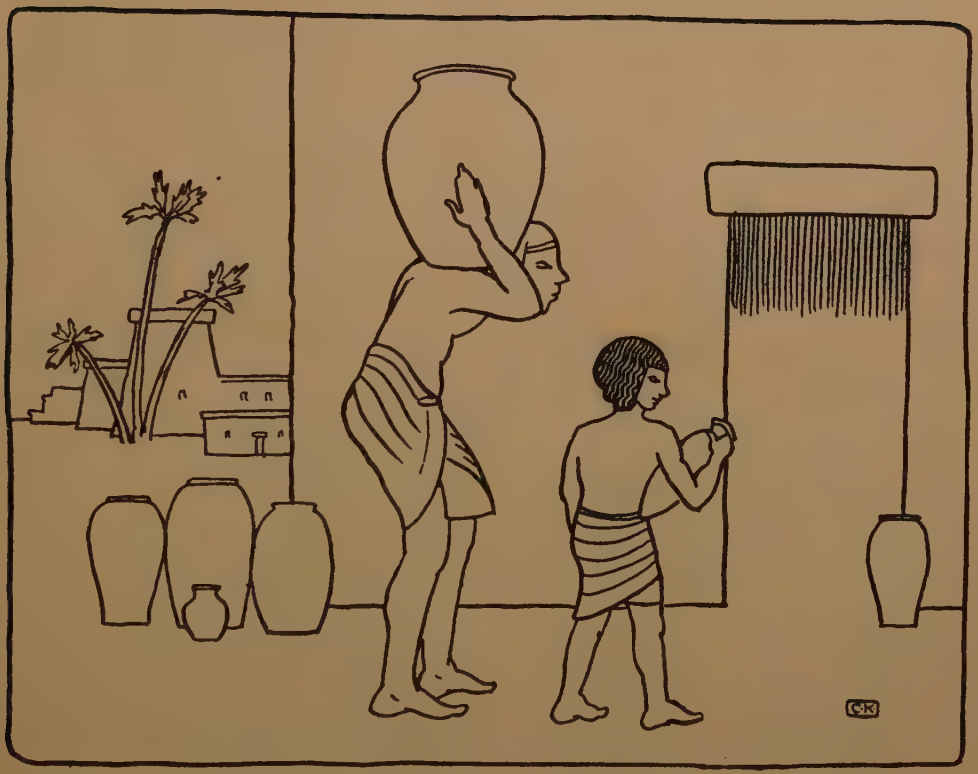
Such a river! It was always changing, in winter so very small, then in the summer swelling and flooding till it came nearly up to the village.

Sometimes he had a ride on a fishing boat and helped the fisherman spear the fish, or listened to the song of the bird catcher as he mended his snares.

"With snare in hand I hide me,
I wait and will not stir;
The beauteous birds of Araby
Are perfumed all with myrrh."

Or Sokar, on another day, would sit on the threshing-floor, and sway back and forth, chanting with the driver of the oxen, an old, old song.

"Thresh out for yourselves, thresh out for yourselves,
Ye oxen, thresh out for yourselves!



Sokar's house was made of mud.

Thresh out the straw for yourselves for food,
And the grain for your masters.
Give yourselves no rest,
It is indeed cool to-day."

When he was helping his father make bowls he listened to fairy stories of dwarfs and crocodiles, of palaces and kings. He little thought he was going to live a fairy story himself, but the very next day it began, and this is the way it happened.

II

Sun up and a cool breeze blowing over the rippling Nile. Sokar stole out of the house looking for some fun and hoping he would not have to work all day. There in a row were his father's clay pots made the day before. They were drying and were soon going to be baked in the oven. There was a large clay pot, and a middle-sized clay pot, and a very small clay pot.

"Here is a chance for a game," thought he, and took some wet clay and made a tiny little ball and threw it into the smallest jar. Then he made a larger ball and threw it into the middle-sized jar. Then he made a big, big ball and threw it at the largest jar of all. He threw it as straight as he could, but oh dear me, it didn't go into the jar but knocked it over. Into the sand it fell and broke into pieces.

Sometimes he helped the bird-catcher.

Then Sokar knew he had been naughty and that his father would punish him when he saw the broken jar. In fact, he heard his father call, "Sokar, Sokar-Shines-with-Spirit!" and he was so frightened that he ran as fast as he could over the sand with his bare feet. The sun made long shadows which scared him. Where should he go to hide? Everything was flat and open, but there ahead were the long green reeds by the river. They grew up tall and straight, and looked very cool and safe. Into them he ran and hid, lying flat on the muddy ground.

Now one of his father's stories was of a magician who made a wax crocodile and threw it into the water, and when a bad man went in to bathe the crocodile came alive and ate him up. So as he lay there he kept looking around and thinking of the story. Suddenly he saw a big crocodile come waddling through the rushes. It came nearer and nearer, and finally opened its great red jaws.

Sokar shook with fear and cried, "Oh, crocodile, wax or real, please don't eat me! I know I am bad because I broke Father's jar, but if you'll let me go, I'll do anything! —I'll bring you the Magic Lotus Bud."

"What good shall I have from that?" asked the crocodile. "I am hungry and want some breakfast. A flower will not feed me."

"No, but if you eat it you will turn into a prince—so my mother told me once," said Sokar, trembling.

The crocodile smiled at that, for he wanted to be a prince very much.

"Very well," he said, "I'll give you till to-morrow at exactly this hour, and if you are not here with the Magic Lotus Bud, I'LL COME AND FIND YOU!"

He opened his jaws very wide indeed, and then crawled off and sank into the river. How glad Sokar was to see him go! But the danger was not over. For even though he

The crocodile opened its great red jaws.

ran away he was sure that the great man-eating beast would find him out. So he must hurry to find the lotus. But where?

His mother had told him of Egyptian water lilies, and how they grew in pools and fountains. The Magic Bud was sure to be in the royal pool, she said. To little Sokar the queen's garden was as far away and as hard to reach as the sun boat which sails the heavens. Could he find it and see the lovely ladies who pulled the lilies to twine in their hair? And perhaps, oh, wonderful, see the queen herself, and ask her to help him?

At any rate there was no time to be lost or his father would find him and send him back to carry clay. Around his neck on a string he wore a little charm stone. It was in the shape of an eye. "Oh, Uzat, my pretty little Uzat," said Sokar, "show me where to go. Tell me what to do. I know you can protect me against all bad things. Help me

now!" As he twirled the charm he saw near by a raft made of bamboo poles, deserted by some fishermen. Sokar was so small and light he thought he could squat on it and pole along by the edge of the river.

III

It was pretty hard for Sokar to get the raft out of the rushes, they were so tall and strong. He pulled and tugged and got his feet very wet, but the water felt cool and pleasant. He found a strong pole which was a great help to him, and he finally got the raft free and into the river. With a swish and swirl the current seized it. And away he went so fast that he was afraid. But he held his pole out behind and steered as well as he could. Down the river a little way he saw a fisherman eating his lunch, and then Sokar remembered he had eaten no breakfast and was very hungry. He could see the man munching hard brown bread and eating dates. Sokar came up behind him and held on to a papyrus stem. He made his voice very small. "Oh, Mr. Fisherman," he said, "if you want to catch many

fish, be good to little Sokar-Shines-with-Spirit and give him a bite of bread."

Now, this made the fisherman jump, for he thought he was all alone. Also he was scared, for Sokar was the name of one of the gods he worshiped, and he thought, "If I look at him he may do me harm." So he shut his eyes and handed all the rest of his lunch to Sokar, then bowed his head and mumbled prayers as fast as he could.

Sokar remembered something his father had said to him and repeated it in the same small voice to the fisherman: "One is poor, another is rich, but bread remains to him that is generous." He added as he poled away, "You will catch many fish." Then he ate the bread and dates while his raft floated down the river.

In the far distance Sokar saw the city "White Wall," where he had never been. He had not left his little home before, nor dreamed of such a daring voyage; now he might

see the great king in his palace, and lords and ladies and gardens.

At last he came to the entrance to the water garden. There he found guards armed with long spears, walking up and down and watching. What could he do? Must he give it up and go home? His raft drifted into a little cove of rushes and stopped. He looked across the river and—oh, dreadful, he saw a big black crocodile opening its jaws. Was it coming to get him?

He must get help. He thought of the kind god Ptah whose statue he prayed to in the temple, so he cried to him, "Oh, Ptah of White Wall, won't you help me? Oh, help me, please!" He knew Ptah had eight little dwarfs for helpers, who long and long ago had hammered out the sky of copper and made the hills and valleys. He turned his charm, Uzat. The only answer he had was "Me-i-aow" and again "Me-i-aow."

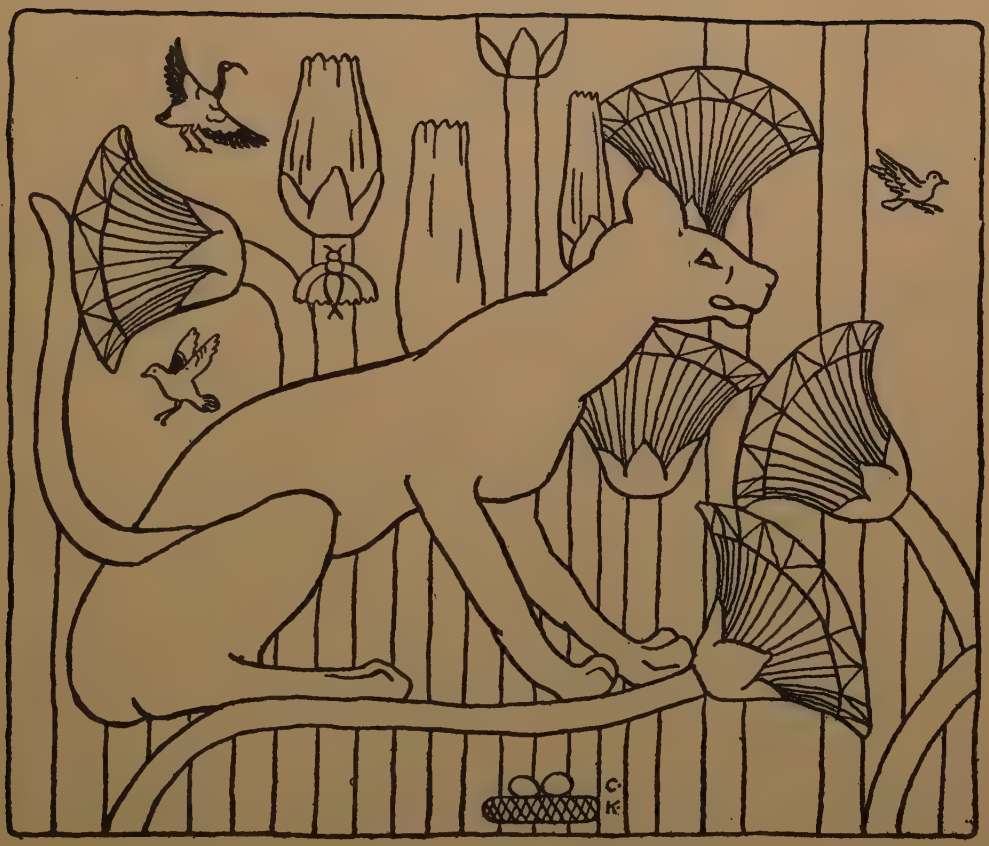
He looked up. There in the papyrus stems was a big cat. It was a sleek, nice cat. Looking at him with yellow eyes it said, "Why do you call on Ptah? Trouble him not but call on me, for I am sent to help you." Sokar knew at once it was a holy cat from the temple, and that it was wise he doubted not.

"I am looking for the Magic Lotus Bud," he said. "If I don't get it the crocodile will eat me to-morrow. So you see it is very important, for I do NOT want to be eaten."

"Of course not," said the cat. "Can you climb?"

"Oh, yes. I've climbed up to get dates from the palm trees and you know that's a long way up. I've climbed fig trees, too," replied Sokar.

"Well, that is good," said the cat. "For first you must climb up here with me, then on that sycamore tree over there by the wall, and in that way you may get into the garden. But you must wait till the sun is very hot and the



In the papyrus stems was a big cat.

guards are asleep. In the royal garden are many lotus blossoms, and they are all white. But in the queen's own garden in the center pool is one rare plant. The buds and the blossoms are a beautiful blue, and one of the buds is the Magic Bud."

"How shall I know it?" asked the little boy.

"That I cannot tell you, little Sokar-Shines-with-Spirit. You must ask some one in the garden. Follow me." The cat sprang lightly along from branch to branch till it came to the sycamore tree. "Here I must leave you," said the cat. "But take this hair from my tail. If you get into trouble, trouble you can't get out of, throw it to the north, call 'Helpers of Ptah, come!' and help will come. Now, climb the wall, drop into the bushes, go to the far end of the garden and crawl through the water channel. It will take you into the queen's garden. Good-by."

IV

Sokar was left alone. The sun was hot. The guards grew sleepy and sat down in the shade and went to sleep. Sokar crawled like a monkey to the top of the wall. He dropped—nothing moved but a little green lizard. He slipped along the wall till he came to the channel. It was big and round and empty, and it felt cool to his little brown body. He peered out the other side and there was a beautiful garden. The pillars all around were carved with lotus caps, and in the center was a pool with a crowd of blue and white lotus blossoms. Such joy to find them, but which was the Magic Bud? No one to tell him; only a heron, a big bird asleep in the reeds.

"Oh, Mr. Heron," said Sokar, "are these your flowers? Won't you please tell me which is the Magic Bud?"

The heron waggled his head and stood first on one foot, then on the other.

"You'll be sorry, you'll be sor-ry," he croaked, "but I'll tell you! It's that one!"

It was the loveliest, bluest bud of all, and so near to Sokar that he just had to stretch out his hand and touch it. It was done. He had picked it and held it up, while the heron mumbled, "You'll be sorry," and went to sleep.

He turned to go away. Just then he heard a soft voice say, "I wouldn't go if I were you, little brown boy; no one that comes into this garden ever goes out."

There under the shade of a palm tree, seated on a carved chair, was a princess. She had black hair wreathed with lotus buds. Her long white dress was of finest linen, and a necklace of blue stones hung around her neck. A little slave girl was fanning her as she sat there.

"No one goes out," she repeated.

"But I must," said Sokar. "If I don't give this to the crocodile, he will eat me."

"He can't if you stay in here," said the princess, "for there are no crocodiles here. It is too bad you picked a blue lotus bud, because the queen mother said whoever did must die."

"YOU'LL be sor-ry," croaked the heron in his sleep.

"Here she comes! Oh, little brown boy, creep under my chair and hide."

The queen mother was an old woman. Nemathap, she was called. She had once ruled the city, with the great Pharaoh, her husband. Now, her son Zoser ruled the city, but the old queen still ruled the palace.

Out she came, and straight to the pool of lotus blossoms.

"A-ha!" she cried. "Some one has been picking my lotus flowers—a bud is gone! Is it you?"—to the princess.

"Some one has been picking my lotus flowers."

Sad to tell, the lotus bud which Sokar held in his hand just peeked out from behind the princess, but he was hidden. "Oh!" shrieked the queen mother. "There it is—she dies!"

But Sokar was no coward. He jumped out from behind the princess and said, "I did it. I picked it. I needed it. You have so many, why do you care for one little lotus bud? I promised to take it to the crocodile. I must go," and he started off.

But the queen clapped her hands and a slave came. "This boy deserves to die," she said, "for he has picked a lotus bud. But he is only a little poor boy, and instead he shall be a slave for life, and work—always work. He shall help carry heavy stones where Zoser builds his pyramid. Take him into the palace and guard him." And she went away.

Two slaves stood beside him. They were big and carried staves. The princess looked sad.

"You must go, little brown boy. Every one obeys the queen mother. Perhaps some day if I am queen I can save you, for I am brought from a far city to see whether Zoser finds me fair enough to be his queen. The queen mother hates me. Remember I will help you if I can. Go."

But Sokar knew a better way. He took the hair from the cat's tail and threw it to the north. "Come, helpers of Ptah, come!" he cried.

Where in this walled garden could help come from? He waited, listening, and there came a sound of trumpets and drums. To his surprise the king appeared at the palace door, most gorgeously dressed. He stopped and bowed to the princess.

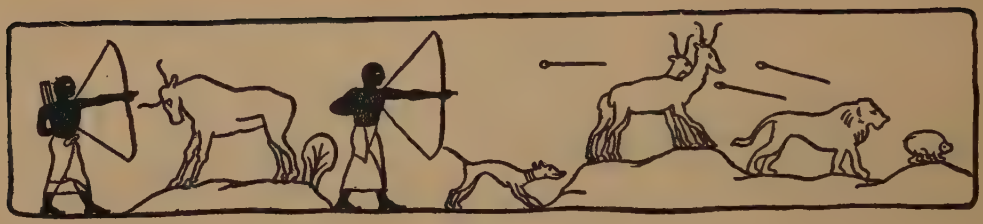
"Fair Hathor," he said, "you are as fair as a flower. What favor may I grant you this day to cause you to smile?"

Hathor knelt. "Oh, King Zoser," she replied, "give

me this little brown boy to be my slave and mine only."

"So be it," said the King. "He is yours."

"Now no one can hurt you. You shall fan me when the day is warm," said Hathor to Sokar. Sokar felt very happy.

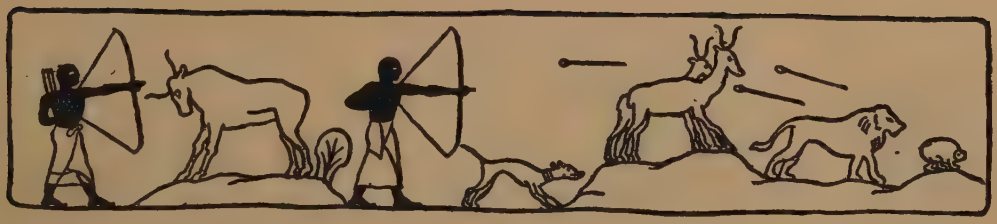


V

So the princess rose and took Sokar into the palace with her. There in the great hall sat the queen mother. Music was playing and dancers were entertaining her. A slave was giving her a drink. It looked like fairyland to the little desert boy, and he would have enjoyed it, only he was so very much afraid of the awful queen. There she sat! He slid behind a column and waited for the princess to make her bow.

"Where is the little boy I turned into a slave?" asked the queen mother. "Why did he not come in with the soldiers, as I commanded?"

"O fair queen," said the princess, "King Zoser changed him from your slave to mine, since I needed a boy to fan me. We are even now going to accompany the Pharaoh in his boat on the river."



The old queen was very angry and vowed that she would kill Sokar, but she was also afraid of the king and did not dare to say so. Instead she smiled and said, "I, too, am going with you in the cool of the day." But first she called her scribe, and bade him bring reed pens and papyrus, and write in haste an order to Imhotep, the royal builder.

Then they all formed a very noble procession through the palace. There at the door that opened on the river stood the Pharaoh Zoser. There the royal boat waited with many strong rowers to make it go swiftly. A canopy of azure linen was stretched to keep the sun from the royal king, queen and princess. The princess took Sokar with her to waft her golden fan.

The rowers plied their oars, and the boat glided over the flooding waters of the Nile. They saw the tall green papyrus rushes, where ducks flew in and out. At one place

some hunters with greyhounds and bows and arrows were hunting. They bowed low when they saw Zoser and waited till the royal boat had passed before shooting. On went the boat till the city was left behind. For some time they floated on the shallow flood-water. Then they saw rising out of the sand a building of huge blocks of stone.

"There," said King Zoser, "is my tomb. See, the men are working on it. No one has ever made a mountain in a desert before. It grows higher and higher, and in it I shall lie for ever and ever."

Now, when the queen, Nemathap, saw the men and boys working, she looked at Sokar and remembered that she had willed him to be a slave, and she was very angry to think this foreign princess had fooled her. There stood Sokar fanning the princess and feeling very safe.

Suddenly the queen called out, "Oh, King Zoser, there is Imhotep, the royal architect, near the tomb. I want to

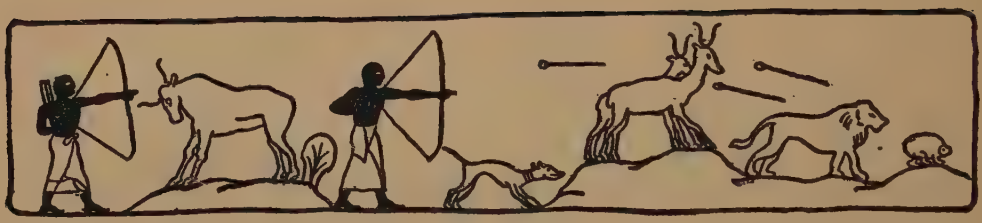
"There is my tomb," said King Zoser.

send him an order about my new storehouse; will you let your little slave-boy carry my message?"

Now, Zoser could not say "No" to his queen mother. He ordered the boat to go to the shore and that Sokar should be landed. Sokar ran through the sand past the workmen to where the great Imhotep stood, and gave him a papyrus roll on which was written curious picture language. He turned to go.

"Stop, boy," said Imhotep. "This says you are to remain here and work, as a punishment for a grievous offense against the queen. Dangerous and hard work, her order is."

Before Sokar knew what was happening, a great black slave had come and struck him with a whip and driven him off where other boys were working. He expected the princess to come and help him; but no, there went the royal boat, gliding away toward the city White Wall, which he



might not see again. The great pyramid towered above him. He knew he would have to climb and work, work and climb. Just one thing comforted him—he had the Magic Lotus Bud safely tucked in his girdle. For more than work and slavery, he feared the crocodile.

VI

450382

The next day the slave drivers woke the workmen and boys very early before it was light. "Off to the quarry," they said, "before the heat of the day." The meal they had of brown bread and dates was scanty, and they were hurried to the great barges. The men and boys and overseers crowded on board. After rowing some miles they went inland to the limestone cliffs from which came the blocks of stone to build the great pyramid. Pulling and hauling was hard for Sokar, for he was only a little boy. In those days when they did not have machinery driven by steam and electricity, they had to get their power out of little human legs and arms, and it took a great army of men and boys to pull on the ropes and do all the work.

The boy who worked next to Sokar whispered to him

when the overseer was not looking, "Some night I am going to run away, and go to Memphis. When the black boar, Set, eats the white moon-pig and the earth is dark, I shall go! For there are many teachers in Memphis and I would study to do great things. I want to be a scribe so I can sit in the market and write letters and get paid much corn and salt. You can come with me, little new boy, if you are a good runner."

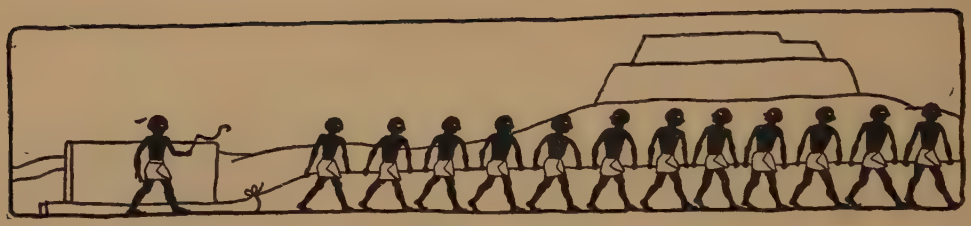
But Sokar told him a story that made his eyes open wide, a story of the crocodile and the cat and the princess. "If I run away," said Sokar, "I shall wait for King Zoser when he goes to the city, and kneel and say, 'O Pharaoh, I am the princess's little slave boy. Won't you please give me back to her?' And he will, and I shall live in the palace."

But the overseer saw them talking and struck them with his whip and drove them to work.

Finally the barge was loaded and the tired boys were allowed to rest while the strong men rowed it back to the pyramid. Before unloading came the noon rest. The sun beat down on the sand and the great stone building was deserted. The men had gone to seek the shade of their houses and some had gone to the river. Sokar stole off by himself and found a little place among the rushes to rest. His eyes closed and he fell asleep. What could that be? Something touched his face. He jumped, and looked up to see the huge crocodile standing over him. The beast grinned most horribly.

"Aha! I have found you! I went to the meeting place at sunrise and you weren't there, so I had no breakfast. Then I went to the palace, then I came here. Now I have you! What a good breakfast you will make, little brown boy!"

His jaws opened—great red jaws—and he thrashed his



tail as he came toward Sokar. But Sokar shouted, "No, you will NOT have me for breakfast, for I have the Magic Lotus Bud," and he took it out of his girdle. It was such a magic flower that it was not even faded. Its wonderful blue was as fresh and lovely as when he picked it from the queen's pool. "Here it is, Mr. Crocodile. If you want to be a prince you must close your eyes and eat the lotus."

Now, the crocodile wished very much to be a prince. He quite forgot to eat Sokar, but took the Magic Bud and did as Sokar said. Lo! in a trice the great lumbering crocodile had disappeared and a handsome prince stood beside the little boy. His robe was all embroidered in green and red and he had on a royal headdress. Best of all, there was a beautiful boat of carved wood with four rowers and a sail. It was almost as splendid as Zoser's.

Just then came the clang of metal which called the men

to work, and Sokar heard the harsh voice of the overseer who was coming to hunt for him.

"Where are you, Sokar-Shines-with-Spirit?"

The prince saw him coming, reached out his hand, quick as a flash pulled Sokar on to the boat, gave the word to the rowers, and away they sped, to the amazement of the overseer. Sokar was safe. The prince-crocodile had saved him!

VII

The beautiful boat on which they found themselves seemed made of the Magic Lotus Bud. It was very low on the water, and the end curved up and over and flowered into a painted lily. It flew swiftly over the smooth river till it was far from the pyramid and the overseer. Sokar breathed a sigh of relief. He thought of the princess and how she had deserted him. Then he remembered how sad she had looked when she said, "No one that comes into the garden ever goes out."

The prince asked him what he was thinking about, and he told him of the princess who had come from a far land.

"So came I," said the prince. "I seem to remember now a time before I was a crocodile. I lived in a palace

with tall columns and was to have been a king, but a magician who wanted his son to rule changed me into a crocodile and doomed me to wander till I was saved by a child and a magic flower. You were the child, little Sokar, and glad I am that I did not eat you."

Just then a heron came flying from White Wall and lit on the prow of the boat. "Why, it's the heron from the queen's garden," said Sokar. "How came you here?"

The heron's feathers looked very rumpled and he croaked dismally. "She pulled my tail feathers—the queen did. She said I was a spy. She hates the princess and is going to kill her. She thought she was alone in the garden and she said out loud, 'A drop of this in her alabaster cup and she dies.' I was half asleep and said, 'You'll be sor-ry,' and then she pulled out my most beautiful feather and I flew away. Why don't you save the princess? Even the Pharaoh can't help her."

"We must fly to her," said Prince Croco, "a princess in distress! We will save her and avenge your feathers! Now to White Wall. We must disguise our Sokar before we go near the palace."

So they rowed to the quay and went ashore. The prince had found plenty of gold in a small chest on the boat. He bought a beautiful golden harp for himself. He dressed Sokar as a dancing boy and gave him a trumpet.

He gave Sokar a trumpet.

VIII

Now that very day King Zoser was having a great feast. All the nobles of White Wall were to be there, and as Croco and Sokar stood on the quay one of these nobles came to embark to go to the palace. He wanted to please the king and take musicians with him. So he called Sokar to him and asked him if his master would bring his harp and play for them. They bowed low and said they would go with him. Croco told his boatmen secretly to stay there until evening, and then row to a place near the palace and wait.

How Sokar trembled as he entered the great hall! There sat the Pharaoh, there the queen mother, and there the beautiful princess, who looked sadder than ever. There were great tables piled with food, roast ducks and geese,

fruits and cakes, wines and beer. Everywhere lotus buds filled the air with fragrance. The ladies wore them in their hair and played with them. Servants passed quietly to and fro serving the noble guests, and soon different companies of wrestlers and dancers began to entertain the company till the broad stone hall was filled with gay groups. Croco and Sokar took pains to stay near the royal party and were glad to be asked to play and dance, for Sokar was afraid that the piercing eye of the queen mother would light on him and recognize him. How to tell the princess they were there! They did not know. Sokar tried in vain to dance near her, but always the queen was looking.

Suddenly a wailing cry coming from the queen's garden pierced the air. It rose and fell and rose again so shrilly that the music could not be heard. They heard a servant say in an excited voice, "It is the sacred cat.

He lies in the queen's garden and they fear he may die. May Horus prevent such a terrible thing!" The king and queen rose and, followed by many servants, went out. Here was the chance Prince Croco had been looking for.

"Come, Sister, fly with us! Your little Sokar-Shines-with-Spirit will tell you I am a friend. Come with us to the land beyond the sunrise. Away to the Harbors of Incense!"

The princess needed no other word, for she had longed to go for many weary days. They ran through the great hall to the water side, but where was the prince's boat? They remembered in despair that they had said to wait till evening before it was to approach the garden wall. It was now bright daylight. At any minute the princess might be missed.

Suddenly Sokar spoke, "The Cat! My helper is wailing for us. Wait here, I will steal into the garden and

perhaps I may find a hair from his tail, and get his help."

So he left Prince Croco and the princess to hide behind some great columns, and went softly through the deserted hall to the garden. There he found an excited crowd. A priest had been called and was droning a prayer to the gods to cure the cat.

He had been placed on a royal cushion and two servants wielded golden fans. A dish of warm milk had been placed near by and other delicacies from the feast were there to tempt the cat. If any one came near him he would yowl and scratch at them. But when he saw Sokar in the crowd he jumped up and ran and rubbed his legs, purring with every sign of joy.

"It is a miracle!" said the queen. "This little musician pleases the sacred beast. Sit down and stroke the cat and see if he will eat for thee."

So Sokar squatted on the ground and as he fed him he deftly pulled two hairs from his tail. It was none too soon. A cry from the guards who had deserted their post—"The princess is gone!" The king, the queen, and the crowd turned and rushed into the great hall and a search was made. There was no time to be lost.

Sokar threw the hairs, calling, "Come, helpers of Ptah!" In a trice eight little dwarfs appeared in the garden. Sokar knew by their kind faces and long beards that they were Ptah's helpers and were all-powerful.

"Quick, by the garden wall, little Sokar. You will find help over there. We will stay here and guard the palace door. Ptah, himself, guides Croco's boat."

Then Sokar knew that Ptah, the modeler, the god who shaped men's lives, was with him. Fear left his heart. The noise and shouts from the palace disturbed him not.

He climbed the wall and up into the old sycamore

tree. From there he could see the entrance to the palace. Two guards with long spears began to hunt behind each column and at last espied Croco and the princess. Yet as they seized them, Sokar saw a boat rowed by many rowers. On the deck were a company of archers. Their bows were long, their quivers full of arrows. At the prow, calm and majestic, stood the god, Ptah. But, oh horror, the guards saw too, and ran, dragging the prince and princess into the palace. The great door shut with a clang, the bars were closed and all was silent.

Sokar turned his eyes hopefully to the boat with its archers and the powerful figure of Ptah. It came swiftly and quietly to shore, and Sokar ran to tell the men the plan of the palace. It seemed to him as though by magic the number of archers was far greater than so small a craft could hold. Not a word was spoken. In fact, when Sokar came abreast of the boat, he saw to his amazement

"Farewell, Princess from the Harbors of Incense."

that the god, Ptah, was carved of wood and was not a real man, yet silent orders seemed to come from him. Each warrior crept to a place under the wall. Scaling ladders were raised and in one breathless moment they had climbed to the top and showered their arrows on the guards beneath. Ladders were thrown down and Sokar with some fifty archers entered the palace. The king's guards, wounded and frightened, threw down their spears.

"Ah, the little brown boy has come back. He charms the cat, he brings archers from beyond the sunset. Surely he is protected by the great god Ptah, the god of the White Wall."

So spoke the queen mother as the warriors seized the princess. Now King Zoser, turning, looked sadly at fair Hathor, for he realized he would never see her more.

"Farewell, Princess from the Harbors of Incense! Farewell, little Sokar-Shines-with-Spirit. Trouble us no

more with your magic, we yield to the will of the great Ptah."

So they departed. The smooth-flowing Nile received them and the boat bore them away to peace and happiness.

IX

Yet Sokar was not quite happy. Prince Croco and the princess were talking together and did not seem to care whether he was there or not. He was safe at last, but where was he going? "To a far land, to the Harbors of Incense," he had heard Croco whisper to the princess. So many strange things had happened during the last two days he felt very tired and he also had a queer feeling of being lonely. Just then the boat swerved sharply and the rowers lifted their oars for a moment while the steersman righted the course. They had nearly run down a fisherman in his low, flat boat. Sokar, peering over the side, saw shining fishes filling one end of the boat and the fisherman's cat waiting for his part of the sport. A song floated up to him from the little boat.

"Bread remains to him that is generous,
Sokaris said it! Lo, he made magic,
And my boat is laden with fishes,
Ai-yo— Ai-yo— Yoo-oo-oo."

Could it be his fisherman who had given him brown bread and dates? It seemed a year ago that he had pushed out into the swift river on the raft.

The rowers had gained speed again and the papyrus rushes were flashing by. There was a familiar look to the cove, the distant palm tree, the little hut. A man sat under the tree molding clay, and suddenly Sokar knew that it was his father. He tried to call out, but something choked him and he could only fall in a little heap and cry and cry.

The soft voice of the princess roused him, "Why, my little brown boy, why do you weep? Are you not happy to be safe and free?"

A great lord and lady were coming to his hut.

He flung himself at her feet. "Yes, but it was my father,—yes, but it was my home, and now we have left it behind and I shall not see it more." He wept the louder. Croco's quick eye had seen it all; he gave a sign to the steersman to turn the boat, and by the time the princess had soothed Sokar's tears, lo, they were nearing the familiar cove.

His father heard the dip of many oars, and watched in surprise to see a handsome boat landing where only humble fishers carried in their nets.

What was this? A great lord and lady coming to his little hut! Who was that boy dressed like a dancing boy? He was the size of his dear little Sokar, but Sokar had been gone two days now. They had found marks of a great crocodile in the rushes. The mother was even now beating her breast and wailing, "Oh, Sokar, Sokar-Shines-with-Spirit." They had carried an offering that very day to the priest in the temple. He

thought how harsh he had been when Sokar broke the jar.

Now the great lord was speaking to him, "Your jars are good jars. You paint fine patterns on them. I want a man to make such jars for me. But I live far away. Pack up your things, bring your wife and come. You will be rich in the land where I am prince."

"But Sokar may come back," cried his father. "I cannot go."

The mother had come to the door. She saw the dancing boy. She gave a cry: "He is here! Sokar is here! Look, he has come back." Sokar leaped into her arms.

The father said to Prince Croco, "We will go."

The princess called, "Come, little brown boy, come away."

They all got into the beautiful boat and this time it carried them afar to peace and happiness.

POSTSCRIPT

POSTSCRIPT FOR GROWN-UPS

"Sokar and the Crocodile" is a purely fanciful story with an ancient Egyptian setting. Archæologically it is impossible, save for the fact that the "dramatis personæ," King Zoser, his mother Nemathap, and the great Imhotep, did have something to do with "White Wall" and the step pyramid, as long ago as the Third Dynasty.

It was written because the ten-year-old drawing class in The Cleveland Museum of Art which was studying Egyptian art, kept asking such questions as these: Did the Egyptians have fairy stories? Who built the pyramids? What kind of crowns did the kings wear then? What kind of jewels did a princess wear? Were there gardens planted in the desert sands of Egypt?

There is a great appeal in Egypt, with its wealth of action figures, which tell stories as child-like as Krazy Kat; with its secret alphabet, whose letter signs are eagerly learned and used by the children; and with its exhaustless magic, which comes to us in the carved figures, the sacred eye, the little doll servants, and in every old tale. All these things were bound up in the eight or ten lessons in which Sokar lived his adventures on the banks of the Nile. Some of the illustrations are by the children;* but an older and more skillful hand than theirs has adapted the museum material which inspired the children, giving Sokar a place in it, and letting him rather freely skip about from one dynasty to another, very much as the children turned from the step pyramid to the tomb of Beni Hasan.

Our procedure was something like this:—After reading the first chapter of the story the children shut their eyes and imagined they saw a picture. Some one told what he saw and drew what he could on the blackboard. Then we asked two questions: Did the picture tell its story? Did it look Egyptian? This gave rise to much discussion. What were Egyptian houses like? How did little boys dress in that

*The three colored drawings are by Carlton Bucher, and the SKAR black and white by Martha Maurer.

POSTSCRIPT

country? How did a fisherman fish, a hunter hunt, and a potter make his pots? How did men look who were doing these things? We could not answer all these questions in one lesson, but followed the special interest of the children and began to get acquainted with Egyptian things. Perhaps actual old pottery was put on the table or a visit was made to the Egyptian collection. The children hunted for things to illustrate their mind picture. If the interest centered on the model of a boat, they all drew it in the air until familiar with it and later drew it from memory on paper. Information was always sought after the first imaginative drawing was made. A series of drawings usually revealed the fact that memory drawings were simpler and truer than those drawn from the object. Appreciation grows with the storing of such memories.

I have placed the story at the time of the building of the step pyramid in the Third Dynasty, but have drawn freely on Egyptian art of all periods for illustrations, especially the Twelfth and Eighteenth Dynasties. Just now when the tombs near Zoser's pyramid are being explored, even the temple of Zoser himself, I hope that this fairy tale may create an interest in the reality of what happened so long ago.

The verses in the first chapter are from ancient papyri, translated in Donald Mackenzie's *Egyptian Myth and Legend* (published by the Gresham Publishing Company of London), and in *Life in Ancient Egypt* by Adolf Erman (published by The Macmillan Company of New York). I wish to express my thanks for permission to use these translations; and also to the Egypt Exploration Fund for permission to reproduce plates from their *Beni Hasan* and *El Bersheh.* The invaluable research and beautiful books of the Egypt Exploration Fund furnished much of the inspiration for the class work of the children, and many of Mr. Kubinyi's illustrations are frankly adaptations of those plates.

I am deeply and gratefully indebted to the Cleveland Museum of Art. The resources of the Egyptian collection and the library, the privilege of reproducing photographs, and the generosity of Mr. Whiting have made the book possible.

I add a list of books which would make the use of this and other Egyptian stories a practical thing in any school or museum.

POSTSCRIPT

A History of Egypt, by James H. Breasted, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.
Egypt and Its Monuments, by Robert Hichens, The Century Company, New York.
Manual of Egyptian Archæology, by G. Maspero, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.
Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt, by G. Maspero, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.
Egyptian Myth and Legend, by Donald A. Mackenzie, The Gresham Publishing Company, London.
A Concise Dictionary of Egyptian Archæology, by M. Brodrick and A. A. Morton, Methuen and Company, London.
Beni Hasan, by Percy E. Newberry, Egypt Exploration Society, 13 Tavistock Square, London.
Life in Ancient Egypt, by Adolf Erman, The Macmillan Company, New York.

Hunting scene from tomb at Beni Hasan.
(Published by The Egyptian Exploration Fund.)

A snarer catching birds in his net. (*Published by The Egyptian Exploration Fund.*)

A man catching birds in the papyrus rushes. From a tomb of Beni Hasan. (Published by The Egyptian Exploration Fund.)

Bronze mummy case for a cat. (The Cleveland Museum of Art.)

A scribe holding papyrus roll. (Cleveland Museum of Art.)

A wooden image, thousands of years old.
(Cleveland Museum of Art.)

A servant preparing for a feast.
(Cleveland Museum of Art.)

Model of Egyptian boat with rowers.
(Cleveland Museum of Art.)

Egyptian jars, older than the time of King Zoser.
(Cleveland Museum of Art.)

Portrait of the daughter of Tehutihetep from his tomb at El Bersheh.
(Published by the Archaeological Survey of Egypt.)

A heron from a tomb at Beni Hasan. (Published by The Egyptian Exploration Fund.)

6666